FURBEARERS ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Alaska **GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.:** W-27-4
PROJECT NR.: 7.0

WORK LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT LOCATIONS: Game Management Regions 1, 2, 3, and 5

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Alaska Furbearers and Factors Influencing Their Populations

PERIOD: 1 July 2000–30 June 2001

The Status of Alaska Furbearers and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region 1

Regionwide Activities

Prepare a draft furbearer management report. The 3-year furbearer management report was completed in April 2001 and submitted to headquarters.

Write an annual survey and inventory performance report. This draft satisfies the activity as described.

Provide information to the Board of Game on furbearer management. During fall 2000 Region I staff provided information to the Board on Southeast furbearer issues, notably trapping in the vicinity of Ketchikan. The Board heard discussions about conflicts between trappers and other outdoors enthusiasts and referred the discussion back to residents of Ketchikan for resolution.

Seal beavers, martens, otters, lynx, and wolverines as they are harvested and presented for sealing. ADF&G Wildlife Conservation staff, FWP Troopers, and designated sealing agents sealed furbearer pelts harvested in the region. Area biologists and other staff tracked harvest trends and collected biological samples opportunistically. About 4,000 furbearer pelts were harvested and sealed in the region.

Collect anecdotal information from reliable observers about the status of furbearer populations, including the use of an annual trapper survey.

Region I area biologists worked with the headquarters staff biologist to survey trappers and analyze results.

Analyze sealing records, interviews with trappers, trapper questionnaires, and observations by staff and the public. Region I area and assistant area biologists reviewed all available information relating to furbearers and their harvests for regulatory year 2000, reporting upon it in the 3-year management report.

Regional Segment Period Project Costs: $31.2

The Status of Alaska Furbearer and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II

Regionwide Activities

Activity 1: Prepare a furbearer management report.

Draft furbearer management reports were prepared during spring 2001.

Activity 2: Write an annual survey and inventory performance report.

Activity 3: Provide information to the Board of Game on furbearer management.

Region 2 furbearer regulations were addressed during the spring 2001 Board of game meeting

Activity 4: Seal furbearer pelts presented for sealing by trappers and hunters.

Activity 5: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Results of sealing certificate tabulation and the furbearer questionnaire are presented.

Activities by Unit

Unit 6

Activity 1: Conduct fall beaver cache surveys on the Copper River Delta.

Because of the high abundance of beavers and low trapping pressure, cache counts have not been conducted for a number of years. This activity should be eliminated from future work plans.

Activity 2: Conduct spring river otter latrine surveys.

We searched 75 km of coastline in eastern PWS (Orca Inlet and Deep, Nelson, Windy, Cedar and Sheep Bays) for land otter latrine sites during June 1999/00 and July 2000/01. We located 45 active sites for habitat assessment.

Activity 3: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Fur sealing: Beavers -139, Land otters - 63, Marten - 157, Wolverine - 8, Lynx - 2.

Units 7 and 15

Activity 1: Conduct furbearer track count surveys.

Results: No surveys were conducted during this reporting period.

Activity 2: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Harvest results for 2000/01:

	Unit 7	Unit 15A	Unit 15B	Unit 15C	Total
Beaver	112	95	34	29	270
Marten	112	0	0	0	112
Wolverine	15	0	0	0	15
Otter	13	14	8	14	49
Lynx	15	32	22	26	95

Twenty-eight percent of the lynx harvested were kittens.

Unit 8

Activity 1: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Results**:** During the 2000–01 season, 24 trappers brought in 189 otters for sealing yielding an average of 7.9 otters/trapper. The harvest was composed of 102 males (54%), 80 females (42%), and 7 of undetermined sex (4%). Most trappers were local residents (75%), and trapping was the most common method of take (82%). Boats were the most common mode of transportation used by otter trappers (66%), and December and January were the most productive months (35% each). Sixty otters (32%) were harvested along the Kodiak road system.

There were 60 beavers brought in by 13 trappers, yielding an average harvest of 4.6 beavers/trapper. Most trappers were local (GMU 8) Alaska residents (85%), and trapping was the most common method of take (57%). Boats were the most common method of transportation used by beaver trappers (40%), and the harvest was primarily occurred during November (43%) and December (13%). Thirty-seven (62%) beavers were harvested along the Kodiak road system.

Trapper questionnaire respondents reported that furbearer populations were high. With the current low harvest in most areas, developing management objectives for furbearers is not a high priority.

Units 9 and 10

Activity 1: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Preliminary harvests in Unit 9 by species were: 72 beaver, 27 lynx, 50 otter, and 21 wolverine.

Units 11 and 13

Activity 1: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Preliminary Harvest 2000/2001:

GMU 13	Lynx	475	15% Kittens
	Beaver	211	
	Otter	20	
	Marten (13E)	93	
	Wolverine	29	
GMU 11	Lynx	194	8% Kittens
	Beaver	3	
	Otter	3	
	Wolverine	7	

Activity 2: Conduct aerial and ground transect surveys to determine status and trend of lynx populations.

Aerial transect surveys for lynx tracks were not flown this spring due to unfavorable snow conditions.

Unit 14

Activity 1: Conduct furbearer track count surveys.

Surveys are conducted on an opportunistic basis only and have not be conducted since 1996. Track count surveys will be conducted in the future as time and weather allow.

Activity 2: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Preliminary Harvest 2000/2001:

Lynx	42
Beaver	187
Otter	31
Marten	121
Wolverine	10

Information from trapper questionnaires for species that are not sealed showed the following minimum numbers:

Coyote	39
Ermine	9
Mink	43
Muskrat	79
Red Fox	52
Red Squirrel	25

Unit 16

Activity 1: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Fur sealing: Beavers -199, Land otters -28, Marten -742, Wolverine -31, Lynx -2.

Information taken from trapper questionnaires for species that do not require sealing show the following minimum numbers: Coyote - 6, Ermine - 21, Mink - 28, Muskrat - 4, Red Fox - 23, Red Squirrel - 70.

Unit 17

Activity 1: Monitor the furbearer harvest through field observations, fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Fur sealing: Beaver-314, Land Otters-66, Wolverine-35, Lynx-3

Activity 2: Conduct fall beaver cache survey.

Results: 144 miles of stream surveyed and 175 food caches observed.

Other activities funded by Federal Aid on this project:

None

Segment Period Project Costs:

Fiscal year	Region			
2000–2001	II	III	V	Total
Actual	87.6			

The Status of Alaska Furbearers and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region III

Regionwide Activities

Activity 1: Write an annual survey and inventory performance report.

We wrote annual performance reports for all units.

Activity 2: Prepare a draft furbearer management report.

We wrote draft furbearer management reports for all units.

Activity 3: Provide information to the Board of Game on furbearer management during the regulatory process.

No information was provided to the Board of Game because Region III was not on the board schedule for this year.

Activities by Unit

Units 12 and 20E

Activity 1: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

We conducted personal interviews with 8 area trappers to gain additional insight on unit-wide furbearer abundance and trends and trapper effort.

In cooperation with Yukon Department of Renewable Resources and elders from Northway Village and White River First Nation, we mapped historical trapping areas and recorded oral history concerning furbearer population trends within the Chisana and Nabesna River drainages.

We reviewed population management objectives using results from about 35 trapper questionnaires, 8 trapper interviews, sealing documents, and the scientific literature. Based on these data, no changes to the management objectives were necessary.

Activity 2: Seal furs of selected species as they are harvested and presented for sealing to monitor harvest levels and trends.

We sealed fur of harvested lynx (250), otter (3), beaver (6), and wolverine (38) and used this information to monitor harvest effects on population.

Activity 3: Purchase lynx carcasses to assess age and reproductive condition of harvested lynx to monitor impact of lynx tracking harvest strategy.

We purchased lynx carcasses from area trappers, and we necropsied about 150 carcasses to determine the sex and age of the harvested population and to estimate population reproductive performance.

Activity 4: Conduct aerial surveys to monitor lynx and snowshoe hare abundance and distribution.

We did not conduct any aerial surveys due to lack of funding.

Unit 19

Activity 1: Review and revise population objectives.

We reviewed and revised population objectives when the management report was written.

Activity 2: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

We reviewed trapper questionnaires and conducted interviews with trappers when the opportunity arose.

Activity 3: Seal furs of selected species as they are harvested and presented for sealing to monitor harvest levels and trends.

We sealed hides of selected furbearers in McGrath. Preliminary harvest was 77 beavers, 28 lynx, 16 river otter, and 46 wolverine.

Units 20A, 20B, 20C, 20F and 25C

Activity 1: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

We collected trapper questionnaires and sent them to headquarters for summarization.

Furs were sealed and data analyzed. Reported harvest included 387 beavers, 1,083 lynx, 25 wolverines, and 25 otters.

Activity 2: Purchase lynx carcasses to assess age and reproductive condition of harvested lynx to monitor impact of lynx tracking harvest strategy.

The furbearer research biologist purchased lynx carcasses.

Activity 3: Conduct beaver cache surveys in Unit 20B.

The beaver cache survey was conducted and revealed 20 active cache sites along 40 km. of the lower Chena River.

Activity 4: Minimize beaver/human conflicts in the Fairbanks area.

Permits (15) were issued to harvest beavers in areas where beavers were creating a significant problem.

Unit 20D

Activity 1: Review and revise population objectives.

A furbearer management report was written and objectives reviewed.

Activity 2: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

Trapper questionnaires were sent to 34 Unit 20D trappers to help assess furbearer population status.

Activity 3: Seal furs of selected species as they are harvested and presented for sealing to monitor harvest levels and trends.

Pelts were sealed to monitor harvest levels and population trends. Preliminary analysis of sealing data indicates the following harvest: 23 beaver, 248 lynx, 2 river otter, and 20 wolverine.

Activity 4: Purchase lynx carcasses to assess age and reproductive condition of harvested lynx to monitor impact of lynx tracking harvest strategy.

Eighty-two lynx carcasses were purchased from trappers to assess age and reproductive status for estimating population trends. Fifty-seven percent of carcasses were from males and 73% were from adults.

Unit 21

Activity 1: Review and revise population objectives.

We wrote management report and reviewed management objective.

Activity 2: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

In combination with Unit 24, we mailed trapper questionnaires to 94 trappers and conducted informal interviews with 27 trappers.

Activity 3: Seal furs of selected species as they are harvested and presented for sealing to monitor harvest levels and trends.

We sealed furs to monitor harvest of 94 beavers, 7 otters, 65 lynx and 10 wolverines.

Unit 24

Activity 1: Review and revise population objectives.

We wrote the management report and reviewed management objectives.

Activity 2: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

In combination with Units 21B, C, and D, we mailed trapper questionnaires to 94 trappers and conducted informal interviews with 27 trappers.

Activity 3: Seal furs of selected species as they are harvested and presented for sealing to monitor harvest levels and trends.

We sealed furs to monitored harvest of 103 beavers, 15 otters, 201 lynx and 15 wolverines.

Units 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B and 26C

Activity 1: Review and revise population objectives.

We reviewed and revised population objectives during the management reporting process.

Activity 2: Conduct trapper interviews as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

We distributed and compiled responses to the trapper questionnaire and interviewed trappers regarding current furbearer population levels.

Activity 3: Seal furs of selected species as they are harvested and presented for sealing to monitor harvest levels and trends.

We sealed furs including: 146 beavers, 524 lynx, 54 wolverines and 7 otters.

Segment Period Costs:

Expenditure	**Personnel months**	**Personnel costs**	**Operating costs**	*Total*
Planned	8.0	46.5	6.5	53.0
Actual	9.7	56.4	2.8	59.2
Difference	-1.7	-9.9	3.7	-6.2

Explanation:

Actual personnel costs were more than planned because demands on staff time for sealing furs was greater than expected. Actual operating costs were less than expected because some aerial surveys planned for Units 12 and 20A were not completed.

Submitted by:

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Management Coordinator

The Status of Alaska Furbearers and
Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region V

Regionwide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a draft a furbearer management report.

Draft furbearer management reports for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A were prepared Mar–Aug 2001 and submitted to HQ in early September 2001

ACTIVITY 2: Write an annual survey and inventory performance report.

Performance report for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A were prepared August 2001 and submitted to HQ early September 2001

ACTIVITY 3: Provide information to the Board of Game on furbearer management.

None.

ACTIVITY 4: Maintain the furbearer sealing agents in remote villages.

Unit 18. When we were alerted to the need, we recruited sealers in the villages through letters and telephone contacts. We responded to requests for supplies and answered sealer questions.

Unit 22. The Nome Fish and Game office supplied sealing agents with fur seals and sealing certificates, answered procedural questions, trained a new fur sealing agent in Brevig, and processed certificates for payment.

Unit 23. We provided seals and sealing documents to fur sealers in Unit 23.

Unit 26A. I assisted and encouraged vendors in Nuiqsut, Barrow, and Wainwright. I recruited and provided the paperwork for a new vendor in Point Lay.

Activity 5: Monitor the harvest through the fur sealing program, annual hunter/trapper questionnaires and furbearer harvest surveys conducted annually in selected villages.

Unit 18. We are continuing to collect fur sealing data for wolves, otters, lynx, and wolverine. Even though beavers are no longer required to be sealed, we are collecting fur sealing data for them as well. Harvest data for this period has not been finalized. We sent out questionnaires to trappers and received 45 responses.

Unit 22. Fifty-five lynx were taken in Unit 22A. No lynx were sealed from other units. The reported otter harvest was 8 otters; 3 from Unit 22A, 2 from Unit 22B and 3 from Unit 22C. In Unit 22 41 wolverines were sealed; 14 from Unit 22A, 18 from Unit 22B, 6 from Unit, 2 from Unit 22D and 1 from Unit 22E. Sealing is no longer required for beaver in Unit 22.

Big game harvest surveys were conducted in Teller, Brevig, Shishmaref, and Wales and they showed that an additional 5 wolverines were taken in Unit 22D that were not reported on sealing certificates. In Unit 22E, 8 additional wolverines were reported that were not sealed.

Unit 23. Harvest of furbearers in Unit 23 was monitored through the statewide furbearer sealing certificate program. Harvest levels for all species were comparable to previous years.

Unit 26A. We examined sealing certificates for wolverine in Unit 26A. Trappers sealed 21 wolverines, of which 17 were males and 4 females. Fourteen were ground shot and 7 were trapped. Nineteen trappers used snogos for transportation, 1 used skis, and one used an airplane. One was harvested in September, 1 in November, 3 in January, 5 in February, 10 in March, and one in April.

ACTIVITY 6: Improve compliance with current sealing requirements through public communication and education.

Unit 18. We contributed articles to one of the local newspapers and included occasional furbearer articles. At the start of trapping season, we sent posters to the area post offices explaining sealing requirements.

Unit 22. The reason for and importance of harvest reporting was explained at public meetings.

Unit 23. Sealing requirements were reviewed with Unit 23 Advisory Committees and with prominent trappers and hunters in local communities. The Department of Public Safety officer traveled to local communities in Unit 23 to seal furs.

Unit 26A. We made Public Service Announcements on the radio, and told many people personally, that everyone was required by law to have their furs sealed, and that tanneries wouldn't accept furs that were not sealed.

ACTIVITY 7: Assess population status and trends utilizing sealing records, hunter/trapper interviews and questionnaires, village harvest surveys and observations by staff and the public.

Unit 18. Most trappers responding to the trapper questionnaire reported that beaver numbers were higher than last year. Fox numbers are reported to be high as well. This is consistent with our impressions gathered during aerial surveys for other species.

Unit 22. Furbearers in Unit 22 are currently plentiful and many populations appear to be increasing. In Units 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D beaver were reported to be common or abundant with numbers stable or increasing. We had no trapper reports from Unit 22E, but beaver numbers are believed to be increasing in the Serpentine River drainage. In Unit 22A lynx are thought to be common to abundant and stable or increasing somewhat. In Unit 22B lynx appear to be scarce but increasing, particularly in the eastern portion of the unit. In the remainder of Unit 22 lynx are reported to be scarce or not present. River otter are reported to be common and increasing in Units 22A, 22B and 22C. Their status

in Unit 22D and 22E is unknown. Wolverines are thought to be common and generally increasing throughout the unit.

Unit 23. Sealing records were summarized and reported in the triennial furbearer management report. The statewide trapper questionnaire was mailed to selected hunters and trappers in Unit 23.

Unit 26A. Through interviews and observations we determined that arctic foxes and red foxes were fairly abundant in Unit 26A. Coyotes and lynx are rare and river otter densities are very low. Wolverine densities are relatively high and we observed 3 wolverines during 24 hours of moose count flights in Unit 26A during 2000-2001.

Other activities funded by Federal Aid on this project:

In Unit 18, rabies is present among foxes. We responded to several requests to have foxes tested including one that bit a worker at Cape Romanzof.

Segment Period Project Statewide Costs:

Fiscal year 2000–2001	I	II	III	V	Statewide Total
Actual	31.2	87.6	59.2	10.8	188.8

Statewide Total: $188,800